

Partners Meeting
February 4, 2005
Missoula Public Library

Attending: Bruce Newell, Sarah McHugh, Claire Morton, Jodi Oberweiser, Marilyn Trosper, Louise Schlegel, Karen Krantz, Kim Crowley, Nansu Roddy, Gloria Langstaff, Bette Ammon, Patty Jones, and Honore Bray

Best Practices discussion:

Fines –The fine ceiling is \$10. If patron is over that limit and wants to check out at a Partner library, he/she can pay at that library, in accordance with that library's fine policies, and each library accepts and keeps those fines.

Lost items – if a patron loses an item the owning library has to mark the item lost so the bill appears on the patron's record. This requires communicating with the owning library. Payment is received by the patron's home library and sent to the owning library.

Damaged items – if the item is an audio book with parts missing, the borrowing library should try to get those pieces back before returning the item to the home library. If it isn't resolved, contact the owning library and that library will inform and bill the patron. Patron may need to see damaged item so the borrowing library may want to keep for a week or so.

Claims returns process – some concern that a few items may be getting lost on the busses. First contact the borrowing library to check their shelves in case an item may have gotten on the wrong library's shelf. The owning library should check too. All partner libraries should be running a Claims Return report regularly. After 3 months of searching, waive charges and mark lost. Note – when using the Claims Return wizard, make the date the actual due date.

Short term checkouts – discussion followed concerning circulation rules for Partner libraries for 10 days (new books) and 28 days (everything else). Several months ago the group agreed to create a short term (10 day) video loan period so that the Flathead County Library's new videos checked in and out more rapidly. Kim surveyed Flathead patrons and they said they preferred a 10 day checkout for videos. However, all the other Partner libraries are circulating their videos for 28 days – and this creates some confusion among patrons. In order to conform with the other Partner libraries, Flathead will keep their new videos at the 10 day checkout period and gradually move the rest of their video collection to 28 day checkout periods.

Holds statistics reports – Sarah asks what do we want that report to show. All agreed that we want to know the number of holds placed by our own library users. Also would like to know the number of holds placed remotely. Sarah will see if that option is available.

School Partners – the Partners realize that schools may have to limit the number of items users check out – unlike the public library partners who have no limits. Schools can have in-house rules that they implement with their own patrons.

Adding new libraries – much concern was expressed about the process of adding new libraries to the Partner project. These concerns included transportation costs and impact on existing staff members. In particular, some libraries are concerned about the cost of mailing items to and from Anaconda, Hamilton and Drummond since these libraries are not on the bus schedule. Jodi will check to see if Rimrock stops in Drummond. Other concerns center on space available in libraries to collect and ship materials. Finally, the impact on staff was discussed.

All agreed that we need to develop a better communications system among the Partner libraries. Sarah will ask Mike Price to set up a Partner listserv.

Sarah wishes for a setup that is strong enough to support adding new libraries. The consensus of the group was “not no growth but managed growth.” Agreed upon process for adding new Partner libraries:

- Must be MSC library.
- Interested library should contact Sarah who would point them to our Best Practices and put them in touch with an existing Partner library who can share information about costs, staff time, shipping options, etc. Sarah can also let them know the date for the next Partner meeting.
- Library should monitor Partner listserv to learn about ongoing issues.
- Library should come to a Partners meeting and propose coming onboard.
- If library is not on existing bus route, need to address costs that impact all Partner libraries for shipping.

Much discussion followed about developing a courier system. Bruce has been working on a long range plan and budget for MLN that includes looking at a statewide courier system. At this point he doesn't know where the funding would come from. He also doesn't have a complete sense of who goes where and when. The soonest state money would be available is in two years which doesn't address current transportation needs that the Partner libraries are facing right now – and could potentially keep us from adding new libraries to the Partner project.

Ideas – a hub library that everything comes to and then is redistributed. All agreed that a courier is cheaper than postage and the staff time for mailing. Current Partner libraries will send Bette information on how much money in postage, bus charges, and staff time estimates for the first six months of FY 05. Perhaps Partner libraries can pay more to the MSC next year and MSC can hire a courier with those funds.

For now Hamilton can send their Polson & Drummond books to Missoula for redistribution. Hamilton can also send their Polson items to Flathead for re-routing.

ILL reimbursement – the Partner program has effectively broken the current interlibrary loan reimbursement program (even though the Partner libraries only submitted a portion of the actual number of items – claiming 1 transaction for every 5 items) and a fix for that will be dealt with by the Networking Taskforce. The Partner libraries agreed that for FY

05 we would submit actual numbers. Bette will draft a letter to the State Librarian from the Partner library directors with that information so everyone is prepared.

Welcome aboard Drummond and Polson.

Future meeting times – May 20 – in Missoula.